

CLAIMS

1. A multi media communication network for a passenger vehicle, comprising:
 - a plurality of display devices, each device including at least a control processor, a local memory storage area and a display;
 - 5 a local area network including a serial wiring harness, the harness interconnecting each of the plurality of display devices; and
 - wherein each of the plurality of display devices is configured to include a server device portion and a client device portion, each of the plurality of display devices cooperating over the local area network so as to define a distributed server local area network architecture.
- 10 2. The multi media communication network according to claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of display devices defines a network node of the distributed server local area network architecture.
- 15 3. The multi media communication network according to claim 2, further comprising:
 - a plurality of content providing application software routines; and
 - wherein particular ones of the plurality of content providing application software routines are stored on corresponding particular ones of the plurality of network nodes, such that each network node hosts only a specific sub-set of the plurality of content providing applications.
- 20 4. The multi media communication network according to claim 3, wherein the content providing application software routines are selected from the group consisting of internet web site pages, audio-on-demand, video-on-demand, cellular telephony, e-mail, and broadcast television.

5. A modular multi media communication network for a passenger vehicle, comprising:
a plurality of display devices, each display device disposed in a location separate from other
ones of the plurality of display devices, each display device including at least a control processor, a
5 local memory storage area and a graphical display screen;
a local area network signal bus interconnecting each of the plurality of display devices; and
a communication management unit, coupled to the network signal bus, the communication
management unit further coupled to multiple bi-directional communication interface devices, each
communication interface device effecting real-time communication with a different one of a
10 multiplicity of substantially incompatible signal sources.

15 6. The modular multi media communication network according to claim 5, wherein the
multiplicity of substantially incompatible signal source comprises:
a first satellite constellation, providing a first type of content;
a second satellite constellation providing a second type of content; and
a broadband bi-directional VHF communication medium.

20 7. A modular multi media communication network for a passenger vehicle, comprising:
a plurality of display devices, each display device disposed in a location separate from other
ones of the plurality of display devices, each display device including at least a control processor, a
local memory storage area and a graphical display screen;
a local area network signal bus interconnecting each of the plurality of display devices;

a communication management unit, coupled to the network signal bus, the communication management unit further coupled to multiple bi-directional communication interface devices, each communication interface device effecting real-time communication with a different one of a multiplicity of substantially incompatible signal sources; and

5 wherein each of the plurality of display devices is configured to function as a network server, each of the plurality of display devices cooperating over the local area network signal bus so as to define a distributed server local area network architecture.

8. The modular multi media communication network according to claim 7, wherein each
10 of the plurality of display devices defines a network node of the distributed server local area network architecture.

9. The modular multi media communication network according to claim 8, further
15 comprising:

15 a plurality of content providing application software routines; and
16 wherein particular ones of the plurality of content providing application software routines are
17 stored on corresponding particular ones of the plurality of network nodes, such that each network
18 node hosts only a specific sub-set of the plurality of content providing applications.